

# **21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers**

## **Guidance\***

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\*This document contains pertinent excerpts from the Federal Non-Regulatory Guidance published in February 2003 and available in full at: <http://www.ed.gov/21stcccl/>. It also contains added information specific to North Dakota's program.

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## **SECTION A. INTRODUCTION**

A growing body of research and evaluation has assessed the characteristics and the benefits of after-school programs. Initially, evaluations of after-school programs focused not on academic outcomes, but on the quality of program implementation, and most of these studies did not employ scientifically rigorous evaluation designs. This has begun to change as national foundations and universities, as well as Federal, State and local agencies, have invested considerable resources into assessing whether well-designed and well-implemented after-school programs can have measurable effects on student academic performance and behavior. Although the number of studies using rigorous design criteria is still limited, there is accumulating evidence that strongly suggests that after-school programs – if done well – can improve in-school outcomes and behaviors of regular participants. In particular, the literature shows that after-school programs can improve student academic performance, improve attendance and graduation rates, and reduce risky behaviors.

❖ **Students who regularly participate in after-school programs show greater academic gains than non-participants.** Several studies on the effects of after-school care have confirmed that the students involved in these activities attain better academic marks and higher standardized test scores and advanced levels of proficiency, as well as having better attendance.

- According to the Bureau of the Census (2001), about 75 percent of 12- to 17-year-old children who participate in an extracurricular activity are on track academically (that is, in the grade at school expected for their age group), compared with 60 percent of children in this age group who do not participate in such activities.
- Participants in the Big Brother/Big Sister program performed better in school relative to the control group—earning higher grades and missing less school (Tierney et al, 1995). Additionally, studies in Milwaukee and Austin indicate that after-school program participants had higher scores than children in other types of care (Posner and Vandell, 1994; Baker and Witt, 1996). Finally, fourth graders participating in Foundations after-school programs scored higher in reading, math, and language arts than a matched comparison group (Hamilton, Vi-Nhuan, and Klein, 1999).
- Higher levels of participation in LA's BEST after-school program led to better school attendance and resulted in higher academic achievement on standardized tests of mathematics, reading, and language arts. Limited English proficient students who had participated in the LA's BEST program were more likely to be re-designated as English proficient than their non-participating peers (Huang, et al., 2000).
- Active participants in The After School Corporation's programs have had greater academic achievement than non-participating students. Notably, analyses of changes in students' proficiency levels in math found important differences in the number of participating and non-participating students who moved into higher proficiency levels (White, et al., 2001). The relationship between participation rates and academic outcomes was also examined in the Boys and Girls Club *Project Learn* evaluation, which determined that the level

of program involvement, as rated by teachers on a scale of zero to ten, was found to be significantly associated with a number of self-reported academic outcomes, including engagement in reading, use of verbal skills, writing, tutoring and the study of geography (Schinke, Cole, and Poulin, 2000).

❖ **Students in after-school programs are more likely to stay in school and graduate.** After-school programs can counteract many of the disadvantages participants face, and help them to stay in school rather than succumb to the overwhelming pressures on their everyday lives.

- Coca-Cola's Valued Youth Program showed much lower dropout rates for participants than for the comparison group, despite the fact that the participants were more disadvantaged and more likely to qualify for free lunch and to have been kept back a grade than the comparison group (Fashola, 1999).
- Evaluation of the Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP), a comprehensive youth development model with an after-school component, revealed that QOP participants were much more likely than the control group members to have graduated from high school and to be in a postsecondary school. They were also much less likely to be high school dropouts (Hahn, Leavitt, and Aaron, June 1994).

❖ **Students in after-school programs are less likely to engage in risky behaviors.**

After-school activities serve as positive alternatives for potentially troubled youth and keep students involved in enriching activities rather than unproductive and detrimental ones.

- A statewide study of after-school programs in 12 high-risk communities in California found that, among students participating in the program, vandalism and stealing dropped by two-thirds and violent acts and carrying concealed weapons fell by more than one-half. UCLA and UC Irvine studies show that California's after-school programs have cut truancy, suspensions, and expulsions, and aid in students' social development and academic success (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2001).
- Rodriguez et al. (1999) observed that youth attending 4-H clubs for at least one year scored significantly higher on leadership and communication skills, conflict resolution, and self-confidence.
- Correlational analyses conducted as part of the Maryland After School Community Grant Program evaluation confirmed that delinquency and drug use are related to number of hours youth spent unsupervised, level of bonding to school, community or family, academic performance, attitudes towards substance abuse and illegal behaviors, negative peer influence, and social skills. Further, this evaluation revealed that participation in after-school programs significantly decreased the number of hours participants were unsupervised and increased their involvement in constructive activities relative to comparison group students (Weisman, Soulé, and Womer, 2001).

❖ **Studies of other extended-day and extended-time activities have produced similar results to those of after-school programs.** Extended-time programs have demonstrated benefits across a wide range of outcomes, and the longer children are enrolled in school and the longer they participate in active programs, the more likely positive results in achievement and attitude will occur. For instance, longer hours spent on homework and longer hours spent in the classroom support the after-school concept as a constructive tool for academic achievement. Some examples of findings related to extended-time programs are given below:

- Children in full-day kindergarten have done better on achievement tests than children in half-day programs (Fusaro, 1997), and children attending full-day kindergarten have had a significantly better attitude towards reading than children attending half-day kindergarten (Evans and Marken, 1984).
- Increased amounts of time spent on homework and on leisure reading were associated with higher reading scores (Walberg and Tsai, 1984).
- A review of the literature on additional time spent on education concluded that years of schooling and knowledge in humanities, science, and other fields are positively correlated; that an additional year of schooling was associated with increased IQ scores; and that number of days, hours, and minutes spent in school are positively correlated with student outcomes (Frederick and Walberg, 1980).
- Finally, one study found that increasing math class by ten minutes each day increased average math test performance by five to six percent, and an additional hour of math homework each week increased math performance by one to two percent (Aksoy and Link, 2000).

While studies suggest that higher participation in an after-school program is more effective than lower participation, these results still must be interpreted cautiously due to the varying rigor of the studies. However, in light of such examination, researchers (Vandell and Pierce, 2002) identified three key components to a successful after-school program: (1) substantive, authentic activities that are intrinsically motivating and that foster sustained engagement; (2) sustained relationships with a knowledgeable and emotionally supportive staff, and (3) opportunities for positive and supportive relationships with peers. Similarly, researchers with the RAND Corp. found especially strong empirical support of the following three characteristics in the literature of effective practices in after-school programs: (1) ensuring that programming is flexible; (2) establishing and maintaining a favorable emotional climate; and (3) providing a sufficient variety of activities (Beckett, Hawken, and Jacknowitz, 2001). Careful attention toward ensuring that after-school programs embody these characteristics can help make an after-school program effective in promoting higher student attendance and academic achievement.

In summary, although there is not yet an extensive body of scientifically based research on the effects of after-school programs, accumulating evidence from a small number of rigorous studies, coupled with results from a much larger number of less-rigorous studies, strongly suggests that, over time, high-quality after-school programs can benefit students who are regular participants. These benefits are both academic – including better grades, test scores, attendance and class participation – and behavioral (e.g., reduction of risky behavior and

reduced disciplinary actions). The research also suggests that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program, as it strives to provide academic enrichment to students in high-poverty, high-needs schools and communities, will face two continuing challenges: ensuring that the programs offer high-quality, research-based academic content utilizing appropriate methods of teaching and learning; and ensuring that programs are able to attract and retain students who participate regularly and thus can benefit from these investments. The U.S. Department of Education (U.S.D.O.E.) is looking forward to its continuing work with the States and local communities across the Nation to address those challenges.

The passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, significantly amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to expand State and local accountability and flexibility and to stress the adoption of research-based practice, and contained a number of new provisions that specifically affected the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communities Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) program.

The remainder of this document focuses on the requirements of the statute and the U.S.D.O.E.'s interpretation of these provisions. In addition, material that is relevant to the state administered grant program in North Dakota has been included.

## **SECTION B. OVERVIEW OF THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) PROGRAM**

### **B-1: What is the purpose of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program?**

The purpose of the program is to establish or expand *community learning centers* that provide students with academic enrichment opportunities along with activities designed to complement the students' regular academic program. Community learning centers must also offer families of these students literacy and related educational development. Centers – which can be located in elementary or secondary schools or other similarly accessible facilities – provide a range of high-quality services to support student learning and development, including tutoring and mentoring, homework help, academic enrichment (such as hands-on science or technology programs), and community service opportunities, as well as music, arts, sports and cultural activities. At the same time, centers help working parents by providing a safe environment for students when school is not in session.

Authorized under Title IV, Part B, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, the law's specific purposes are to: (1) provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students (particularly students in high-poverty areas and those who attend low-performing schools) meet State and local student performance standards in core academic subjects such as reading and mathematics; (2) offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, art, music, and recreation programs, technology education programs, and character education programs, that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students; and (3) offer families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

## B-2: How has the program changed?

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* made several significant changes to the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program. These changes ensure that the program focuses on helping children in high-need schools succeed academically using scientifically based practice and extended learning time. The new statute provides additional State and local flexibility in how funds can be used to support higher academic achievement, and dramatically expands eligibility for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding to public and private educational and youth-serving organizations.

Changes to the program's authorizing statute include:

- **Implementing activities based on rigorous scientific research.** For the first time, the new authorizing statute provides *principles of effectiveness* to guide local grantees in identifying and implementing programs and activities that can directly enhance student learning. These activities must address the needs of the schools and communities, be continuously evaluated using performance measures, and – if appropriate – be based on scientific research. The principles of effectiveness require that programs:
  - a. “be based upon an assessment of objective data regarding the need for before and after school programs (including during summer recess periods) and activities in the schools and communities;”
  - b. “be based upon an established set of performance measures aimed at ensuring the availability of high quality academic enrichment opportunities; and
  - c. if appropriate, be based upon scientifically based research that provides evidence that the program or activity will help students meet the State and local student academic achievement standards.”
- **Focusing services on academic enrichment opportunities.** Under the new legislation, grantees **must** provide academic enrichment activities to students in high-poverty schools to help them meet State and local standards in the core content areas, specifically reading, and mathematics. In addition, applicants must also provide services to the families of children who are served in the program. Under the previous statute, grantees provided a broad array of services to children and community members. The new legislation allows community learning centers to serve adult family members of students, but not community members at large.
- **Transferring program administration from the Federal to the State level.** The new legislation turns over responsibility for administering the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program to the State educational agency (SEA) in each State. The U.S.D.O.E. will allocate funds to the SEAs by formula. The SEA will manage grant competitions and award grants to eligible organizations for local programs. States now will be accountable to the U.S.D.O.E. for ensuring that all statutory requirements are met. Under the previous legislation, the U.S.D.O.E. managed a nationwide competition and directly awarded over 1,600 grants to public schools and school districts that worked in collaboration



with other public and nonprofit organizations, agencies, and educational entities.

- **Expanding eligibility to additional entities.** The new legislation allows public and private organizations to receive funds directly from the State under this program. Under the previous authority, only public schools or local educational agencies could directly receive grants. The U.S.D.O.E. and NDDPI continues to strongly encourage all applicants to collaborate with other public and private agencies, including the local school districts, to create programs as comprehensive and high-quality as possible.
- **Targeting services to poor and low-performing schools.** The new legislation requires States to award grants only to applicants that will primarily serve students who attend schools with a high concentration of poor students. In addition, States must give priority to applications for projects that will serve children in schools designated as in need of improvement under Title I and that are submitted jointly by school districts receiving Title I, part A, funds and community-based organizations or public or private organizations. These priorities are new. The previous legislation restricted eligibility to inner-city or rural schools and strongly encouraged schools to collaborate with community-based organizations.
- **Extending the duration of grant awards.** States now have the discretion to award grants to local organizations for a period of three to five years. Applicants will have to indicate the length of the grant period sought in their application. The previous law limited the duration of the grants to three years. All grants in this round will have a starting date of September 1, 2003.
- **Increasing accountability at the State and local levels.** The new legislation requires States to develop performance indicators and performance measures that they can use to evaluate programs and activities. States must require local grantees to implement programs that meet the *principles of effectiveness*. Federal law states that the principles of effectiveness must include each of the following:
  - a. “based upon an assessment of objective data regarding the need for before and after school programs (including during summer recess periods) and activities in the schools and communities;”
  - b. “based upon an established set of performance measures aimed at ensuring the availability of high quality academic enrichment opportunities;” and
  - c. “if appropriate, be based upon scientifically based research that provides evidence that the program or activity will help students meet the State and local student academic achievement standards.”
- **Requiring periodic evaluations.** In addition, grantees must periodically evaluate their programs to assess progress toward achieving the goal of providing high-quality opportunities for academic enrichment.
- **Expanding the range of locations in which local programs may take place.** The new legislation provides support for services for children and their families in elementary or secondary schools or in any other location that it is at least as available

and accessible as the school. The previous legislation allowed for community learning centers to be located only in public elementary or secondary schools.

- **Requiring funds to supplement and not supplant.** Grantees must use program funds to supplement and not supplant other Federal, State, and local funds. This “supplement not supplant” provision was not included in the previous statute.
- **Allowing States to require a local match.** States may now require local grantees to match funds. Under the previous law no match was required. North Dakota has determined that no match will be required under the state administered program.
- **Requiring consultation and coordination.** States must, in their State application, provide an assurance that the State application was developed in consultation and coordination with appropriate State officials, including the chief State school officer, other State agencies administering before- and after-school (or summer school) programs, the heads of the State health and mental health agencies or their designees, and representatives of teachers, parents, students, the business community, and community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations.
- **Providing States with funds to carry out administrative responsibilities.** Up to five percent of a State’s 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC allocation may be reserved by the State for the administrative and support responsibilities associated with implementing a quality program. These funds may be used to plan the competition, manage a peer-review process, award the grants, and monitor progress. State-level funds also may be used to strengthen the programs—to provide training and technical assistance to the local grantees and to conduct evaluations.

### **B-3: Which requirements apply to State educational agencies and which apply to local applicants?**

There are two levels of program requirements under the new statute. First, section 4203(a) describes requirements that the SEA must address in its application to the U.S.D.O.E. Second, section 4204(b)(2) describes requirements that an eligible entity at the local level must address in its application to the State (see question D-3). Both levels of requirements are mandated by statute and must be addressed and implemented.

### **B-4: What is a community learning center?**

A community learning center offers academic, artistic, and cultural enrichment opportunities to students and their families when school is not in session (before school, after school, or during holidays or summer recess). According to section 4201(b)(1) of the program statute, a community learning center must assist students in meeting State and local academic achievement standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and mathematics, by providing the students with opportunities for academic enrichment. But comprehensive centers also provide students with a broad array of other activities – such as drug and violence

prevention, counseling, art, music, recreation, technology, and character education programs – during periods when school is not in session. Community learning centers must also serve the families of participating students, e.g., through family literacy programs.

#### **B-5: What is the relationship between the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and other Federal programs?**

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC serves as a supplementary program that can enhance State or local reform efforts to improve student academic achievement and to support their overall development. In particular, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds will create and expand out-of-school programs that offer extended learning opportunities for children and their families. Once these programs have been established with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds, other Federal, State, or local funds can also be used to provide activities and services in these centers. Some illustrative examples of how 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs can operate in conjunction with other Federal programs to meet mutual goals and provide additional resources to target populations are provided below.

##### ***Experience & Practice***

Title I funds, in concert with the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program funds, can provide extended learning programs in schools that integrate enrichment and recreation opportunities with academic services. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program funds can also meet the needs of parents seeking supplemental educational services (such as tutoring and academic enrichment) for their children. Local 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs may also work in collaboration with programs to supplement services to target populations such as migrant students.

Other Federal programs can also complement local 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs. Many current 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs are eligible to receive funds through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service for “After-school Snacks,” and in some cases to provide supper to young children. Local communities can also participate in USDA’s Summer Food Service program. These snacks and meals can contribute to the nutritional services provided in local programs. Services made available through funds from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) can be combined with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs to serve children outside of the regular school day. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs can also utilize Federal funding available through local prevention grants under Title V of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the U.S. Department of Justice). Further information on local prevention grants can be found on the OJJDP website, <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/titlev/index.html>.

In no case, however, may 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds supplant other Federal, State or local funds.

## **SECTION C. FEDERAL AWARDS TO STATES**

### **C-1: How long are 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds available for obligation?**

To ease the transition of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program from a Federal discretionary grant program to a State grant program, Congress made FY 2002 program funds available for Federal obligation for a period of two years. This means that 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds became available for obligation on October 1, 2001 and will remain available for Federal obligation until September 30, 2003. However, under the provisions of the Tydings amendment, States and local grantees have an additional 12-month period to obligate their Federal funds; thus, States and locals will actually have until September 30, 2004, to obligate their FY 2002 funds. In subsequent years, the U.S.D.O.E. anticipates that the funds will become available on July 1 of the current fiscal year and remain available for 15 months.

Note: An obligation does not occur when an SEA makes a local grant award. Obligation of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds only occurs when funds are committed to specific activities by an SEA or local grantee.

EDGAR §76.703 states: “A grantee may use grant funds only for obligations it makes during the grant period.”

EDGAR §76.707 states in part:

The following table shows when a grantee makes obligations for various kinds of property and services.

If the obligation is for	The obligation is made
(a) Acquisition of real or personal property.	On the date the grantee makes a binding written commitment to acquire the property.
(b) Personal services by and employee of the grantee.	When the services are performed.
(c) Personal services by a contractor who in not an employee of the grantee.	On the date on which the grantee makes a binding written commitment to obtain the services.
(d)Performance of work other than personal services.	On the date on which the grantee makes a binding written commitment to obtain the services.
(e)Public utility services.	When the grantee receives the services.
(f)Travel.	When the travel is taken
(g)Rental of real or personal property.	When the grantee uses the property.

## **SECTION D. STATE COMPETITIVE GRANTS TO LOCAL ENTITIES**

### **D-1: What organizations are eligible to apply for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds?**

Any public or private organization is now eligible to apply for a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant. Examples of agencies and organizations now eligible under the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program include: non-profit agencies, city or county government agencies, faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, and for-profit corporations. The statute encourages eligible organizations to collaborate with LEAs when applying for funds and defines the term ‘community-based organization’ as a “public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that (A) is representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and (B) provides educational or related services to individuals in the community.”

### **D-2: Is a local applicant eligible to apply for a grant if it has no prior out-of-school experience?**

Organizations do not have to demonstrate prior experience in providing out-of-school programs to be eligible to apply for a grant. However, an organization that does not have such experience must demonstrate promise of success in providing educational and related activities that will complement and enhance the academic performance, achievement, and positive youth development of the students.

#### ***Experience & Practice***

Positive youth development refers to a philosophy and approach to working with young people that recognizes that: (1) multiple domains of young people’s development—cognitive, social, emotional, physical and moral—are interconnected; (2) all young people have strengths and prior knowledge that serve as a platform for subsequent development; and (3) young people are active agents of their own growth and development.

### **D-3: What must a local organization include in its application to NDDPI?**

The NDDPI will award grants to eligible organizations on a competitive basis in accordance with the statute. Applications must include descriptions of:

- Before- and after- school or summer recess activities to be funded;
- How students will travel safely to and from the center and home;
- How the organization will disseminate information about the center (including its location) to the community in a manner that is understandable and accessible;
- How the activities are expected to improve student achievement;

- Federal, State, and local programs that will be combined or coordinated with the proposed program for the most effective use of public resources;
- How the program will meet the following principles of effectiveness by being based on:
  - An assessment of objective data regarding need for the before- and after-school programs (including during summer recess periods) and activities in the schools and communities;
  - An established set of performance measures aimed at ensuring the availability of high-quality academic enrichment opportunities; and
  - If appropriate, scientifically based research that provides evidence that the program or activity will help students meet State and local student academic achievement standards;
- The partnership between a local educational agency, a community-based organization, and another public or private organization (if appropriate);
- An evaluation of the community needs and available resources for the community learning center and a description of how the proposed program in the center will address those needs (including the needs of working families);
- The eligible organization's experience, or promise of success, in providing educational and related activities that will complement and enhance the academic performance, achievement, and positive youth development of students; and
- How the applicant will use qualified seniors to serve as volunteers, if the applicant plans to do so.

Further, each application must contain assurances that:

- The program will take place in a safe and easily accessible facility;
- The program was developed and will be carried out in active collaboration with the schools the students attend;
- The program will primarily target students who attend schools eligible for Title I schoolwide programs and their families;
- Funds under the program will be used to increase the level of State, local and other non-Federal funds that would, in the absence of these Federal funds, be made available for authorized programs and activities, and will not supplant Federal, State, local, or non-Federal funds;
- The community was given notice of the applicant's intent to submit an application; and
- After the submission, the applicant will provide for public availability and review of the application and any waiver request.

The application must also include a preliminary plan for continuation of the center after Federal funding ends.

#### **D-4: Are there any required priorities for awarding local grants?**

Yes. The NDDPI must give competitive priority to applications that both propose to serve students who attend schools identified for improvement (pursuant to Section 1116 of Title I) *and* that are submitted jointly between at least one LEA receiving funds under Title I, Part A

and at least one public or private community organization. Although the statute provides an exception to this requirement for LEAs that do not have qualified community organizations within reasonable geographic proximity, such LEAs would still have to propose to serve students attending schools identified for improvement to qualify for the priority.

In determining whether an application has been “submitted jointly,” NDDPI will look for evidence in the application that the LEA and at least one other organization collaborated in the planning and design of the program, each have substantial roles to play in the delivery of services, share grant resources to carry out those roles, and have significant ongoing involvement in the management and oversight of the program. NDDPI will consider what organization wrote the application, what organization will be the fiscal agent, whether there is a history of these organizations working together, legally binding agreements, and whether there is evidence in the application of integration of the out-of-school program activities with the regular school day program. Letters of endorsement are not by themselves sufficient evidence that organizations or school districts have substantially been involved in the design of a program.

**D-5: Can a State include other requirements in the local grant competition?**

Yes. The SEA is authorized in the statute to include additional requirements in the local competition so long as they are aligned with the statute’s requirements and priorities. In North Dakota programs must also:

- a. Serve the families of participating students;
- b. Be aligned to state school performance and content standards;
- c. Comply with best practices and if appropriate, be scientifically based;
- d. Meet the principles of effectiveness; and
- e. Be measurable in terms of performance objectives and calculated to achieve the intended outcomes.

**D-6: What is the minimum amount of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds that NDDPI may provide to a grantee?**

By statute, a grant may not be made in an amount that is less than \$50,000. The U.S. D.O.E. interprets this to mean that grants must be for at least \$50,000 per year. In addition, the statute requires NDDPI to ensure that awards are of sufficient size and scope to support high-quality, effective programs. The U.S.D.O.E. has encouraged the State to consider awarding fewer but more substantial awards – large enough to fully implement comprehensive plans described in successful grant applications – rather than a larger number of small awards unlikely to have any measurable impact on student achievement. Consequently, we predict that the average award will be for \$375,000 and will serve an average of three sites. Regardless of the size of the grant, proposed costs must be *reasonable and necessary* to carry out the program’s purposes and objectives.

**D-7: What is the period of a local 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC award?**

The legislation allows States to award grants for not less than 3 years and not more than 5 years. North Dakota has not set an upper or lower time limit other than the three-year minimum or five year maximum. Grant applicants will have to indicate in their grant application the length of the grant, within the three and five year limits, they are seeking. All grants in this round will have a starting date of September 1, 2003.

***Experience & Practice***

Each year, participating organizations should collect data that can help them analyze and refine their programs based on the impact of the activities. Programs with proven effectiveness are those that are most likely to be sustained after the Federal funding ends. Current practice and research strongly suggest that three years is not enough time for local communities to fully develop a program. Research finds that it takes a period of approximately five years of continual revision and improvement for a community to fully implement a successful program.

**D-8: Is collaboration a requirement for LEAs and other public or private organizations eligible to apply?**

The legislation contains several provisions about the importance of collaboration. Section 4204(b)(2)(H) requires districts applying for local grants to provide a description of the partnership between a local educational agency, a community-based organization (CBO), and other public or private organizations, if appropriate. If the local applicant is another public or private organization, it must provide an assurance that its program was developed and will be carried out in active collaboration with the schools the students attend. In addition, Section 4204(i)(1)(B) requires that States give priority to applications submitted jointly by an LEA receiving Title I, Part A, funds and a CBO or other agency proposing to serve students in schools in need of improvement under Section 1116. As noted in D-4, NDDPI must provide the same priority to LEAs proposing to target schools in need of improvement but demonstrating an inability to partner with a CBO within reasonable geographic proximity.

By bringing together community organizations with school districts, centers can take advantage of multiple resources in the community. Community learning centers can offer residents in the community an opportunity to volunteer their time and their expertise to help students achieve academic standards and master new skills. Collaboration can also ensure that the children attending a learning center benefit from the collective resources and expertise throughout the community.



### ***Experience & Practice***

Effective partnerships within the community allow for more efficient use of local resources. Collaboration among diverse partners strengthens the variety of services the community can offer. For example, community learning centers that partner with a county hospital, the local church, and a printing company in the community might more easily offer health care information, have church volunteers serving snacks for the program, and promote the program with free copying services.

An example of such a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC partnership is the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) and Camp Fire USA Lone Star Council. The partnership provides students activities before school, after school and summers. Prior to applying for a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant, Camp Fire provided programs to DISD students, including service learning, drug and gang prevention, and other after-school programs. The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds have provided the opportunity to expand this long-lasting relationship. Presently, a Camp Fire staff member is located in the DISD office and works with the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staff to train program providers and coordinate after-school programs throughout the school district. Camp Fire also receives funding to provide additional quality programs to students during non-school hours. Key elements of this successful partnership include:

- A relationship between the CBO and the district prior to applying for 21<sup>st</sup> Century funds.
- Both the school district and CBO receive funds to administer programs.
- Ongoing communication and coordination between the CBO and district in program delivery.

#### **D-9: May a community learning center be located or take place outside of a school?**

Yes. NDDPI may approve an application for a community learning center to be located in a facility other than an elementary or secondary school. However, the alternate facility must be at least as available and accessible to the participants as if the program were located in an elementary or secondary school. In addition to providing documentation that a non-school facility is as available and accessible as a school, applicants proposing providing services in a non-school facility must provide written documentation that the facility meets all health, fire and safety codes.

Regardless of where the program occurs, the applicant must address how students will travel safely to and from the community learning center and home.

#### **D-10: Are there any requirements for the hours of operation of a center or the number of students a local program must serve?**

Yes. North Dakota has set as a measurement of success state-wide that 75% of the sites chosen will provide an average of 15 hours per week of out of school programming. The statute does specify that community learning centers must offer services during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session, including before school, after school, evenings, weekends and during the summer. Each community should base its application on the needs of its students and their families.

### ***Experience & Practice***

The majority of community learning centers funded directly by the U.S.D.O.E. are open at least 15 hours per week. Research suggests that more time spent in engaged and sustained learning activities yields greater benefits. To ensure that children have ample extended learning time, the U.S.D.O.E. believes that, based on our analyses of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and other after-school program evaluation data, centers should be open three hours a day and at least four days a week. To best serve the children of working families, centers should consider establishing consistent and dependable hours of operation. States may offer guidelines for specific hours centers must operate.

#### **D-11: Can NDDPI award local grants to schools that already receive Federal 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program funds?**

Yes. Communities that presently have a grant from the U.S.D.O.E. are eligible to apply for additional funds under the NDDPI-administered program if they meet eligibility criteria. However, new funds must be used in a manner consistent with all the requirements of the new statute and must be used only to supplement, not supplant, any Federal, State or local dollars available to support activities allowable under the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program. Currently, there are several federally funded programs in North Dakota. These programs may apply for state administered funds if their federal grant has ended or if they are adding additional programming not funded or contemplated in their federally funded program. In other words, existing projects may not fund program activities that are being funded by the federally administered program. They could use “state administered” funds to continue a program that no longer receives federal funds. “State administered” funds received by federally funded programs may be used to only expand or enhance current activities, or to establish programs in non-participating schools within an LEA that has a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant. School districts that have received 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC awards that have ended, or are ending this year, may apply to NDDPI for funds to continue those programs. The supplanting provision does not prohibit “state administered” Federal funds from being used to continue programs where a previous Federal grant has ended.

#### **D-12: May 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program funds support communities that are already implementing before- and after-school activities?**

Yes. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds may be used to expand and enhance current activities provided in existing out-of-school programs, whether supported by public or private funds. For example, a grantee may use funds to align activities to help students meet local and State academic standards if those services are not part of the current out-of-school program. Again, grantees must bear in mind that 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds can be used only to supplement and not supplant any Federal or non-Federal funds used to support current programs. Existing 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs must provide a copy of their most recent APR to show program effectiveness.

#### **D-13: May an NDDPI use 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds to award a planning grant to an organization that currently does not provide any out-of-school time activities?**

No. Funds under this program must be used to provide services and cannot exclusively support planning. The legislation requires a local applicant to demonstrate prior experience or promise of success in providing educational or related activities.

**D-14: Are religious organizations, including entities such as religious private schools, eligible to receive 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants from the NDDPI?**

Yes. Faith-based and community-based organizations are encouraged to apply for local grants on the same basis as other applicants. Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) must meet all statutory and regulatory requirements of this program. In order to ensure that a local grantee, including a FBO, meets the program's purposes and criteria, it should not discriminate against beneficiaries on the basis of religion or on any other prohibited basis. In matters of program eligibility, NDDPI will not discriminate against grant applicants with regard to religion.

Funds must be used solely for the purposes set forth in this grant program. No funds provided pursuant to this program may be expended to support religious practices, such as religious instruction, worship, or prayer. FBOs may offer such practices, but not as part of the program receiving assistance, and FBOs must comply with generally applicable cost accounting requirements to ensure that funds are not used to support these activities. To ensure there is no impermissible use of funds FBOs may wish to keep grant funds in a separate account or accounts to ensure that those funds are not used inappropriately. OMB Circulars A-21 (for educational institutions: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a021/a021.html>.) and A-122 (for non-profit organizations: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a122/a122.html>.) provide further guidance regarding these accounting requirements.

**D-15: Are private school students eligible to participate in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities carried out in public schools?**

Yes. Students, teachers, and other educational personnel are eligible to participate in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs on an equitable basis. A public school or other public or private organization that is awarded a grant must provide equitable services to private school students, and their families, if those students are part of the target population.

**D-16: May several organizations form a consortium to apply for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds?**

Yes. Communities or organizations may apply together to share resources, so long as statutory requirements are met.

**D-17: May North Dakota reserve their second-year funding, or a portion of their funding, to support current Federal 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantees whose programs are ending?**

No. We must distribute all the funds for local grants via a competitive process. Previous Federal grantees can compete for new grants, but cannot be guaranteed that they will receive a grant.

**D-18: How does the legislative requirement for a minimum award of \$50,000 per grant apply to a consortium of organizations?**

The minimum grant award is \$50,000 per year regardless of how many organizations take part in the consortium. However, one organization must be designated as the fiscal agent on behalf of all members of the consortium.

**D-19: Can BIA schools apply to the State and the BIA?**

Yes. Schools within the BIA may apply to both the State and the BIA. However, the school may only accept one grant.

**D-20: On what basis does NDDPI make continuation awards?**

There are no statutory provisions that address the criteria States must assess in determining whether to provide continuation awards for local grants. North Dakota will consider the criterion that the U.S.D.O.E uses in making these decisions (see EDGAR §75.253), that is, whether a grantee made substantial progress toward meeting the objectives set forth in its approved application.

**SECTION E. LOCAL USE OF FUNDS**

**E-1: For what activities may a grantee use 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program funds?**

Each eligible organization that receives an award may use the funds to carry out a broad array of before- and after-school activities (including during summer recess periods) that advance student achievement. Local grantees are limited to providing activities within the following list:

- Remedial education activities and academic enrichment learning programs, including providing additional assistance to students to allow the students to improve their academic achievement;
- Mathematics and science education activities;
- Arts and music education activities;
- Entrepreneurial education programs;
- Tutoring services (including those provided by senior citizen volunteers) and mentoring programs;
- Programs that provide out-of-school activities for limited English proficient students that emphasize language skills and academic achievement;
- Recreational activities;
- Telecommunications and technology education programs;
- Expanded library service hours;
- Programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy;
- Programs that provide assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled, to allow the students to improve their academic achievement; and
- Drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, and character education programs.

### ***Experience & Practice***

Academic enrichment can include tutoring in core academic subjects, and provide extra learning opportunities that provide students with ways to practice their academic skills through engaging, hands-on activities. Such activities might include: chess clubs, to foster critical thinking skills, persistence and other positive work habits; theatre programs, to encourage reading, writing and speaking as well as teamwork, goal-setting and decision-making; book clubs, to encourage reading and writing for pleasure; cooking programs, to foster application of reading, writing, math and science skills; poetry contests and slams, to encourage reading, writing and speaking; woodworking programs, to encourage planning, measurement, estimation and other calculation skills; and computer clubs, including newspaper publishing, to promote writing, editing and knowledge of and comfort with technology.

These kinds of enrichment programs are consistent with evidence of the importance of constructive learning activities during the non-school hours. For example, researcher Reginald Clark found that economically disadvantaged youth who participated in constructive learning activities for 20-35 hours per week performed better in school than their more passive peers.

#### **E-2: Can 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program funds support services to adults?**

Yes. Adult family members of students participating in a community learning center may participate in educational services or activities appropriate for adults. In particular, local programs may offer services to support parental involvement and family literacy. Such programs include Head Start, Early Head Start, Pathfinder Family Center and the NDPASS Project. Services may be provided to families of students to advance the students' academic achievement. However, programs are open only to those adults who are members of the families of participating children.

#### **E-3: Can 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program funds support services for pre-kindergarten children?**

Yes. Although "students" are designated in statute as the intended beneficiaries of the program, younger children who will become students in the schools being served can also participate in program activities designed to get them ready to succeed in school and younger "students" who have siblings attending the program are eligible as family members.

#### **E-4: Several civil rights laws apply to recipients of Federal grants. Do these laws apply to private organizations that receive a grant under this program?**

Yes, these laws apply to recipients of federal financial assistance, whether they are public or private. They include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which bars discrimination based on race, color, or national origin; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which bars discrimination based on gender; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which bars

discrimination based on disability; and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. Section 9534 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in effect provides that nothing in that Act disturbs the application of these laws. By the same token, the Act does not alter the applicability of other non-discrimination laws that are unrelated to the receipt of federal funds (such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which forbids employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, but also contains certain exceptions).

#### **E-5: What flexibility does a local educational agency have in its uses of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program funds?**

Generally, an LEA – or any other grantee – must use its 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds to provide out-of-school enrichment programs as described in its applications. However, the reauthorized ESEA provides some flexibility in how 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds can be used at the local level for grantees that are LEAs.

- *Consolidation of Local Administration Funds.* With approval from the SEA, LEAs may consolidate administrative funds with any other administrative funds available from ESEA programs, consistent with the administrative provisions established for each program. Such consolidation may enhance the effective and coordinated use of administrative funds under the consolidated programs.
- *Schoolwide programs.* LEAs are permitted to consolidate and use funds under Part A of Title I together with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and other ESEA program funds received at the school to upgrade the entire educational program of a school that serves an eligible school attendance area. (A school in which not less than 40 percent of the children are from low-income families is eligible for “schoolwide” status.) However, local schools are still responsible for implementing activities for which they received the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC award.
- *Rural Education Initiatives.* LEAs eligible for the Small, Rural School Achievement program may use their “applicable funding” (funds received under the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, Educational Technology State Grants, State Grants for Innovative Programs, and Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program) to carry out activities authorized under the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, Title I, Part A, Title III, or any of these particular programs.

#### **E-6: Can 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities take place during the regular school day?**

No. The statute specifically indicates services are to be provided outside the regular school day, that is, before school, after school, evenings, weekends, or summer. The program may offer services to students during normal school hours on days when school is not in session, e.g., school holidays or teacher professional development days.

However, activities targeting pre-kindergarten children and adult family members may take place during regular school hours, as these times may be the most suitable for serving these populations.

**E-7: Can the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC local grantees work with other Federal, State and local programs that have related purposes?**

Yes. The NDDPI strongly encourages local programs to identify other sources of related funding and to describe, in their applications, how all of these resources will be combined or coordinated to offer a high-quality, sustainable program. Each local application must identify Federal, State, and local programs that also offer out-of-school services and that will be combined or coordinated with the proposed program to make the most effective use of public resources. However, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds awarded to local grantees may be used only to supplement the level of federal, state, local and other non-federal funds and not to replace funds that would have been available to conduct activities if 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds had not been available. See question B-5 for examples of federal programs that can be coordinated with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs.

**E-8: How does 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC fit within the broader context of a school's improvement plan?**

A 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program can be an important component in a school improvement plan, particularly as it offers extended learning time to help children meet State and local academic standards. Local programs must ensure that the academic services they provide are aligned with the school's curriculum in the core subject areas.

**E-9: May LEAs or other organizations charge indirect costs to their 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant?**

Yes, however due to limited funding, the practice has been to disallow indirect costs. Depending upon the number of applications and the amount of funding sought, indirect costs may again be disallowed. Indirect costs are the expenses incurred by a school district, community-based organization or other entity in administering or providing program services. A grantee must have, or must establish, an indirect cost rate agreement to charge indirect costs to a grant. A grantee that does not have a current indirect cost rate – which may be initially established by a Federal or State agency that has previously provided a grant to that organization – may request that the SEA negotiate such an agreement or refer them to the “cognizant” agency that establishes such a rate. See EDGAR §75.560. The State, as the grantee, is responsible for ensuring that local grantees properly expend and account for Federal funds, including direct or indirect costs. Claims for indirect costs are determined in accordance with applicable Federal cost principles. In some instances, a local grantee may be the direct recipient of other Federal grants or contracts and will have had its indirect costs approved by the Federal Government. In such cases, the State grantee may generally rely on the determinations of the Federal Government and should contact the Federal agency that approved the costs to ensure that its determinations apply to the State's situation. When a local grantee has not been the direct recipient of Federal funds or has not received Federal approval of its costs, the SEA is responsible for determining acceptable direct or indirect costs. The following can be used as a guide:

➤ Local grantee (receiving direct federal funding)

If the local grantee is a non-profit AND receives some other DIRECT funding from a Federal agency (e.g., ED, HHS, or DOL), the indirect cost rate agreement must be approved by the cognizant Federal agency under OMB Circular A-122.

The same scenario applies to Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), pursuant to OMB Circular A-21. (Note: student aid money is not considered direct assistance.)

➤ Local grantee (not receiving direct Federal funding)

If the IHE or non-profit local grantee does NOT also receive direct assistance from a Federal agency, then the SEA is responsible for the rate negotiation.

➤ Local educational agency (LEA)

If the local grantee is an LEA, it should already have an indirect cost rate. The SEA should use the restricted rate methodology when reviewing proposed rates for LEAs.

➤ Commercial organizations

If the local grantee is a for-profit organization, the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) applies. A formal rate agreement is discretionary, but the SEA is responsible for determining the allowability of the costs charged to the grant.

➤ Other information

Direct administrative charging is not recommended because of the supplanting complexities. Additionally, a direct cost approach has to be approved because direct billing will only work if the grant is the organization's sole source of funds. If a fixed-price subcontract is issued by a grantee, an indirect cost rate agreement is not required. However, the grantee is responsible for evaluating the allowability of the costs prior to awarding a fixed-price subcontract.

The awards are subject to the non-supplanting and restricted rate requirements of 34 CFR 76.563.

**E-10: May a grantee charge pre-award costs to the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant?**

Yes, but the grantee must receive prior written approval from the NDDPI to charge pre-award date costs to the grant. If an applicant incurs costs after receiving notification of its 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC award but before the effective date of the award, these costs may be charged to the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant to the extent they would have been allowable if incurred after the award date. However, prior to receiving notice of the grant, the local organization incurring financial obligations is doing so at its own risk.

**E-11: Can a local grantee charge the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant for costs incurred after the grant period?**



An organization that receives a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant may use 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds for allowable costs only during the grant award period. For example, a grantee is free to enter into a multi-year contract with a service provider; however, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds may only be used for allowable costs related to that contract occurring within the grant award period.

**E-12: How does the “carryover provision” apply to 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds at the local level?**

Under the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program, NDDPI has some discretion regarding carryover of unobligated 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds. NDDPI may permit its grantees to carry over unobligated 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds, or NDDPI may collect those funds at the end of the initial grant period and redistribute them to other participating grantees. This general rule is tempered by the requirement that each grantee receive at least \$50,000 annually for a minimum of three years. Thus, provided a grantee is making substantial progress in implementing its 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program, the NDDPI may not redistribute 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds that remain unobligated by the grantee after its initial grant period if doing so would reduce the total amount of funds available to the grantee from a given fiscal year's appropriation below \$50,000. On the other hand, if NDDPI determines that a grantee is not making substantial progress and decides not to award a second or third year 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant continuation, NDDPI may redistribute any unobligated funds, even if doing so would reduce the funds available to the grantee below \$50,000.

Experience in the federally administered program shows that, particularly in the start-up period of a grant, there are usually some carryover funds given that it often takes more time than initially thought to hire all staff, recruit program participants, and develop a broad range of program services.

**E-13: May a local grantee use 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program funds to pay or reimburse a proposal-writing firm for developing its grant application?**

According to OMB Circular A-87 (Proposal Costs), the costs of preparing proposals for potential Federal awards are allowable, so long as the U.S.D.O.E approves the expense. However, the U.S.D.O.E. rarely approves such requests. When proposal costs are approved, they are normally treated as indirect costs and not charged directly to the grant.

**E-14: Must community learning centers provide services free of charge?**

No. However, programs must be equally accessible to all students targeted for services, regardless of their ability to pay. Programs that charge fees may not prohibit any family from participating due to its financial situation. The priority of the program to serve poor students and families could be compromised through high program fees. Programs that opt to charge fees must offer a sliding scale of fees and scholarships for those who cannot afford the program. Income collected from fees must be used to fund program activities specified in the grant application.

## **SECTION F. EVALUATION & ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **F-1: What information will the U.S.D.O.E. collect from NDDPI ?**

The U.S.D.O.E. is in the process of developing annual ESEA consolidated reporting requirements for States. In addition to consolidated reporting, the U.S.D.O.E. may also issue program-specific reporting requirements. These will be shared with the States as they become available.

### **F-2: What evidence is required from the States and local programs to determine whether 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs are research-based and effective?**

In its application to the U.S.D.O.E., NDDPI described the performance indicators and performance measures that it will use to evaluate local programs and activities. These performance measures can be used by local grantees as the “established set of performance measures” described in the second bullet below.

Local programs must indicate how they meet the *principles of effectiveness* described in the law. According to statute, programs or activities must be based on:

- An assessment of objective data regarding the need for before- and after-school programs (including summer school programs) and activities in schools and communities;
- An established set of performance measures aimed at ensuring high-quality academic enrichment opportunities; and
- If appropriate, scientifically based research that provides evidence that the program or activity will help students meet the State and local academic achievement standards.

### **F-3: What is scientifically based research?**

Scientifically based research, as defined in Title IX of the reauthorized ESEA, is research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs. This means research that: (1) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment; (2) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn; (3) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators; (4) is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment, experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition

controls; (5) ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; (6) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

#### **F-4: When is scientifically based research appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program?**

When providing services in core academic areas where scientifically based research has been conducted and is available – such as reading and mathematics –a community learning center must employ strategies based on such research. The U.S.D.O.E, in collaboration with other agencies, will continue to identify programs and practices based on rigorous scientific research and will ensure that such information is made widely available.

##### ***Experience & Practice***

Scientifically based reading research has identified five essential components of effective reading instruction. To ensure that children learn to read well, explicit and systematic instruction must be provided in these five areas:

1. **Phonemic Awareness** – The ability to hear, identify and manipulate the individual sounds – phonemes – in spoken words. Phonemic awareness is the understanding that the sounds of spoken language work together to make words.
2. **Phonics** – The understanding that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes – the sounds of spoken language – and graphemes – the letters and spellings that represent those sounds in written language. Readers use these relationships to recognize familiar words accurately and automatically and to decode unfamiliar words.
3. **Vocabulary Development** – Development of stored information about the meanings and pronunciation of words necessary for communication. There are four types of vocabulary:
  - Listening vocabulary – the words needed to understand what is heard
  - Speaking vocabulary – the words used when speaking
  - Reading vocabulary – the words needed to understand what is read
  - Writing vocabulary – the words used in writing
4. **Reading fluency, including oral reading skills** – Fluency is the ability to read text accurately and quickly. It provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time.
5. **Reading comprehension strategies** – Strategies for understanding, remembering, and communicating with others about what has been read. Comprehension strategies are sets of steps that purposeful, active readers use to make sense of text.

#### **F-5: What are the NDDPI evaluation requirements?**

NDDPI must conduct a comprehensive evaluation (directly, or through a grant or contract) of the effectiveness of programs and activities provided with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds. In our application to the U.S.D.O.E., we described the performance indicators and performance measures we will use to evaluate local programs. NDDPI must also monitor the periodic evaluations of local programs and the results of these evaluations must be disseminated to the public.

### ***Experience & Practice***

*After-School Programs and the K-8 Principals*, developed by the National Association for Elementary School Principals (NAESP), in cooperation with the National Institute on Out of School Time, The National School-Age Care Alliance, and the U.S.D.O.E., identifies standards for quality school-age child care. One of the standards of excellence that specifically pertains to after-school programming reflects a commitment to promoting knowledge, skills, and understandings through enriching learning opportunities that complement the school day. Specifically, high-quality after-school programs should offer opportunities for children to develop in the following areas:

- Communication skills in reading, writing, speaking, spelling, and listening.
- Math skills in computation, application, and problem solving.
- Scientific inquiry into the natural and physical world, as well as practical applications of science and technology.
- The interrelationships of people and cultures to historic, geographic and economic environments.
- Participation in the arts, including visual arts, music, dance, and drama.
- Development of physical fitness and motor skills through sports and other physical activity.
- Opportunities for problem-solving that strengthen decision-making and higher-level thinking skills.
- Study and time-management skills to encourage children's responsibility for their own learning.
- Personal and civic responsibility and the significance of service to others.
- Appreciation of, and respect for, differences in culture, race, and gender.
- Skill development in computer and multimedia technology.

(Source: The National Association of Elementary School Principals. *After-School Programs & The K-8 Principal*, p.7.)

The National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) has developed the *NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Care*, which may be a useful tool in developing and evaluating programs. In addition, NSACA publishes the journal *School-Age Review*, which contains important developments in theory, research and practice in the after-school field.

### **F-6: What are the evaluation requirements for local grantees?**

Each grantee must undergo a periodic evaluation to assess its progress toward achieving its goal of providing high-quality opportunities for academic enrichment. The evaluation must be based on the factors included in the *principles of effectiveness*. The results of the evaluation must be: (1) used to refine, improve, and strengthen the program and to refine the performance measures; and (2) made available to the public upon request. Local grantees, working with NDDPI, should evaluate the academic progress of children participating in the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program.

### ***Experience & Practice***

Good evaluations start with a set of important questions that can be answered during the actual evaluation. In large part, those questions may be determined through a careful analysis of the goals of the program. For example, improving academic achievement is, by statute, a mandatory goal. Each goal should have specific indicators that are measurable and that can be assessed repeatedly over time to track progress. An indicator for improving academic achievement, for example, may be students' reading grades. Once the goals and indicators have been framed, local grantees should identify data sources that are available for the indicator. For reading grades, the source may be report cards or test scores because they are a quantifiable indicator for success.

*Beyond the Bell: A Toolkit for Creating Effective After-School Programs*, developed by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, offers guidance and evaluation tools to help programs develop indicators for program goals, tips for creating good survey questions, and helpful resources in data collection and evaluation, as well as information on choosing an external evaluator.

In addition, the U.S.D.O.E. and the American Institutes for Research developed a *Continuous Improvement Management Guide for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers*, to address the need for on-going self-assessment and self-evaluation of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Programs. To download the Continuous Improvement Management Guide, go to [www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/21cent/cim226.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/21cent/cim226.pdf).

### **F-7: What are the U.S.D.O.E's plans for the national evaluation of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program?**

The U.S.D.O.E. has contracted with Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., to conduct an evaluation of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants awarded by the U.S.D.O.E. from FY 1998 through FY 2001. The results of the Mathematica report may be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/21cent/firstyear/>. The U.S.D.O.E. intends to fund a national evaluation to examine the effectiveness of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program as a State-administered program.

### ***Experience & Practice***

According to information in the publication **Start Smart: Learning the Basics**, produced jointly by the National Center for Community Education and the Afterschool Alliance, it is important to note that effective communication is about: (1) conveying a considered and specific message, (2) using particular tools, (3) targeting specific audiences, and (4) identifying deliberate purposes. These four elements may be helpful to the States in conveying and disseminating program results.

#### **F-8: How does NDDPI assure that organizations other than LEAs will be able to provide academic enrichment and have access to student achievement data?**

In the local competitions, we have included a priority for applications submitted jointly by (1) an LEA receiving Title I, Part A, funds, and (2) CBOs or other public or private organizations that propose to serve students attending schools in need of improvement. Through such partnerships, a grantee responsible for implementing and evaluating the local program can ensure access to student achievement data. Because of the legal obligation to maintain confidentiality of student data, the U.S.D.O.E. and the NDDPI encourage LEAs to gather the achievement data necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The LEAs should also be responsible for sharing the content area standards and curriculum with its partners.

### **SECTION G. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION**

#### **G-1: What suggestions do you have for addressing the Need component of the application?**

We suggest that you provide a description of your community and the extent to which the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population. In doing this, you may:

- (a) Cite the factors that place students at risk of educational failure, e.g., the poverty rates in the communities to be served, the percentage or rapid growth of limited English proficient students and adults, the percentage of Title I students, the dropout rates, and the literacy rates and education levels in the community. We suggest that you use specific and relevant data regarding the students and community members to be served by the project and the needs of the community.
- (b) Describe how the proposed project will mitigate the risk factors for each target population. Applicants are advised that a needs inventory may be helpful in determining the needs of the community and the gaps in the services that are available. The services to be provided should be closely tied to the identified needs.

## **G-2: What suggestions do you have for addressing the Quality of the Project Design component of the application?**

You should clearly describe the activities to be provided by the project and elaborate on how these goals and objectives are linked to the identified needs. Specifically a high quality project should offer opportunities for children to develop in the following areas:

- Communication skills in reading, writing, speaking, spelling, and listening.
- Math skills in computation, application, and problem solving.
- Scientific inquiry into the natural and physical world, as well as practical applications of science and technology.
- The interrelationships of people and cultures to historic, geographic and economic environments.
- Participation in the arts, including visual arts, music, dance, and drama.
- Development of physical fitness and motor skills through sports and other physical activity.
- Opportunities for problem-solving that strengthen decision-making and higher-level thinking skills.
- Study and time-management skills to encourage children's responsibility for their own learning.
- Personal and civic responsibility and the significance of service to others.
- Appreciation of, and respect for, differences in culture, race, and gender.
- Skill development in computer and multimedia technology.

Further, we suggest that you clearly delineate the roles to be played by each of the partners, describing who will do what, when, and where, to what ends, and with what anticipated results. It is also suggested that you carefully tailor your activities to address the specific needs of program participants and to achieve the desired outcomes. For example, explain how your project will provide services and activities during extended hours that are not currently available during the regular school day, how project staff will vary their approaches to help meet a child's individual needs, and how staff will collaborate with regular school day teachers to assess a student's needs.

Be clear in addressing how specific activities in the project design will lend themselves to assisting students in their area(s) of need. For instance, merely asserting in an application that the project will assist students in meeting or exceeding local and state standards in core academic areas does not provide the reviewers of the application with a full understanding of how this will occur. Successful applicants will address the needs of potential dropouts and students otherwise at risk of academic failure, including students living in poverty and students with limited English proficiency.

Please include letters of commitment or memoranda of understanding that clearly indicate the role and capacity of each partnering organization discussed in the application. Applicants are advised that the quality of letters of support, with a clear demonstration of buy-in from senior administrators of the partnering organization, is more important than the quantity. Under the federally administered program, the most successful applicants have



involved their community partners in planning and writing the grant application, as well as in helping to implement the grant once awarded.

**G-3: What suggestions do you have for addressing the Adequacy of Resources component of the application?**

You should show that appropriate resources and personnel have been carefully allocated for the tasks and activities described in your application. Successful applicants make sure that their budget will adequately cover program expenses, including transportation. It is important to demonstrate how you will leverage existing school resources, such as computer labs, libraries, busses, and classrooms to carry out your activities. We also suggest that you describe the resources that partners are contributing, such as the use of community recreational areas, staff, supplies, etc. You are advised that costs should be allocated, and will be judged, against the scope of the project and its anticipated benefits. In the federal competitions, successful applicants provided evidence that their plans had the support of program designers, service providers, and participants.

Please provide a detailed budget narrative that itemizes how you will use grant funds as well as funds from other sources. Budgets must include funds for at least two project staff members to attend a two-day annual meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program in Washington, DC, each year of the project. You must also include funds to cover travel and lodging expenses for at least three persons to attend two regional training activities during each year of the project. Remember that grant funds cannot be used to purchase facilities or support new construction.

**G-4: What suggestions do you have for addressing the Quality of the Management Plan component of the application?**

Charts, timetables, and position descriptions for key staff are particularly helpful in describing the structure of your project and the procedures for managing it successfully. We recommend that you clearly spell out objectives, actors, events, beneficiaries, and anticipated results. Experience shows that successful projects budget for and employ a full-time project director and seek guidance and advice from a variety of members of the community. Elaborate on the issue of sustainability after the grant period by providing a **written plan** including how your lead and partnering organizations will assist in sustaining the project. Successful projects describe the role and responsibility of all key staff, and plan and provide resources for ongoing staff development and training.

**G-5: What suggestions do you have for addressing the Quality of the Project Evaluation component of the application?**

We suggest that you submit a strong evaluation plan that will shape the development of the project from the beginning of the grant period. The plan should include the program objectives and performance indicators (contained in Appendix III to this document), clear benchmarks to



monitor progress toward specific objectives, and outcome measures to assess impact on student learning and behavior. More specifically, the plan should identify the individual or organization that has agreed to serve as the evaluator for the project and describe the evaluator's qualifications. It should describe the evaluation design, indicating: (1) what types of data will be collected; (2) when various types of data will be collected; (3) what designs and methods will be used; (4) what instruments will be developed and when; (5) how the data will be analyzed; (6) when reports of results and outcomes will become available; and (7) how information will be used by the project to monitor progress and to provide accountability information to stakeholders about success at the project site(s).

In the federal experience, they found that successful applicants have included the evaluator in the actual writing of the grant application.

#### **G-6: What suggestions do you have for addressing the Cooperation and Participation component of the application?**

Applicants should demonstrate that they have consulted with other local, state, and federal programs. Letters of commitment, participation on the management team, participation in planning the services to be provided and who and how those services will be provided can be a part of demonstrating effective cooperation and participation. Evidence of a working relationship with programs such as Title I, Title IV Part A Subpart 1, USDA Child Nutrition Programs, TANF, Head Start, Early Head Start, Pathfinder Family Center, NDPASS Project, and JJDP- funded programs could be included to demonstrate this component.

### **SECTION H. MISCELLANEOUS**

#### **H-1: What portions of the U.S.D.O.E.'s General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) apply to the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program?**

Part 76-State-Administered programs, Part 77- Definitions that Apply to U.S.D.O.E. Regulations, Part 80-Uniform Administrative Requirements for the Grants and Cooperative Agreements to States and Local Governments, Part 82-New Restrictions on Lobbying, Part 85, Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants), Part 99-Family Educational Rights and Privacy.

#### **H-2: What are the requirements for program staff?**

Successful applicants will use a variety of personnel to provide program services to students and their families. Programs need not employ licensed teachers for every position; however, when making employment decisions, programs should consider the needs of the students and their families and whether those needs will be met by a prospective employee considering that employee's training, education and experience. Full-time program staff who will interact with

students, whether volunteer or paid, must be fingerprinted and background checked. To the extent practical, others should be fingerprinted and background checked as well.